

Document No. 003

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INTELLOFAX 18
NO CHANGE in Class.

25X1A

FLD
834☐ DECLASSIFIEDClass. CHANGED TO: **CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP**

Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77 INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Date: DDA REG. 77/1763

18 APR 1978

By: 015

COUNTRY French Indo China

25X1A

DATE:

INFO.

25X1A

DIST. 18X July 1978

PAGES 2

SUPPLEMENT

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SUBJECT

ORIGIN

"PEUPLADES" OR TRIBES

25X1A [REDACTED] of the Tribes of Tonkin, the Tho, centered in the region of Hoa Binh (105-58, 20-56), are the most important numerically. They are warlike and have no particular political convictions. Both the French and the Viet Minh have had some success in using them as mercenaries. The Nung, centered in the district of Lang Son (106-50, 21-54), are the most important politically. They are the most advanced of the tribes from the point of view of intelligence and culture and they greatly resemble the Chinese. There are numerous other tribes such as the Miao, Man and Lolo which are more or less backward.)

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1. The Viet Minh have exercised great care and skill in the handling of these tribes in attempting to secure their respect and loyalty and countering French efforts to use them. The general effort is one of integrating them with the Annamese in patriotic activities. At the same time, they flatter them by encouraging harmless cultural differences such as tribal dress, songs, dances and handicrafts. The law courts which deal with them have juries who understand their languages; they are allowed to testify in their own language without an interpreter - a flattery which was never accorded to them by the French. However, they are encouraged to learn Annamese and to regard themselves as Viet Nameese. In the People's Committees and National Welfare Associations they are integrated with the Viet Nameese. The same is generally true in the Army and the Tu Ve. For limited purposes, their own military organizations are preserved, particularly to combat the French and French-paid mercenaries of other members of the tribes.
2. An example of the Viet Minh method of flattering the tribes was to be seen in late 1945 when they named Chu Van Tan as Minister of National Defense. Tan was a member of the Nung tribe. In the position of Minister he was largely a figurehead. [REDACTED] note: This was also reported by a French consular official who stated that Tan is a member of the Tho tribe and that the Tho and the Miao are powers with which to be reckoned along the Kwangsi-Tonkin border, that the paramount feeling of these tribes is fear of Viet Nameese domination and for that reason they are cooperating with the French.)

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OVERSEAS CHINESE IN FRENCH INDO CHINA

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comment: There are about one million Overseas Chinese in Viet Nam. Half of these are in French-controlled areas and half in Viet Minh-controlled areas. The welfare of this population is of deep concern to the Chinese Central Government of China from the point of view of "face", current and future remittances and long-term Chinese imperialism. Traditionally this population takes little interest in politics; its only interest is to remain unmolested and to be permitted to conduct commercial and business activities. In the last year and a half the Chinese Kuomintang has made considerable effort to stir up political consciousness among this population. At the same time, though handicapped by lack of means and communication, the Chinese Communists have attempted to influence this population toward their side. Some of the leading officials of Viet Nam have been in the Chinese Communist capital of Yenan. Certainly, both sides have made considerable progress, but the degree of their success cannot be definitely determined.)

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3. Traditionally, the French have treated the Overseas Chinese shabbily. They have placed obstacles in the way of their commerce to favor French trade. Socially, all classes of the French have treated the Overseas Chinese with arrogance. This has served to cause an anti-French undercurrent of sentiment among this population. The Viet Minh, however, have attempted to treat the Overseas Chinese with all possible consideration.
- 25X1A note: It has been previously reported that in their Scorched Earth policy the Viet Minh spare Chinese property as much as possible.) In Cao Bang (106-16, 22-39), in favor of the Chinese, the Viet Minh make an exception to the law against gambling; they permit one gambling house to flourish and only Chinese are admitted. The Overseas Chinese in Viet Minh-controlled areas are exempt from the solidation of funds for national defense, to which the Annamese population is constantly subjected. Nevertheless, the inevitable difficulties of trade in the Viet Minh-controlled areas have alienated the sentiment of the richer and more substantial Chinese from the Viet Minh. The poorer Chinese merchants, traders and workers are in favor of the Viet Minh.

4. Article 12 of the present Viet Nam Constitution guarantees that... "foreigners who have fought for democracy and liberty and who are persecuted and forced to flee and go into hiding may request refuge on Viet Nameese soil".
- 25X1A comment: This appears to be an invitation to Chinese Communists.) The Overseas Chinese in French Indo China are organized into "congregations" which are officially recognized by the Viet Minh. Each congregation has its own head. comment: This is the 25X1A traditional organization among the Chinese in French Indo China which existed during the French regime.) The congregations choose an official delegate who is sent to Nanking to represent them.

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